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The Triumphant Believer.

THE SUBSTANCE
OF A
S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH

OF

Mr. WILLIAM WOTTON,

OF HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS,

Preached on Sunday, the 30th of March, 1799.

BY

The Rev. W. B. WILLIAMS, *K*

CHAPLAIN TO THE MARQUIS OF DOWNSHIRE.

Death's terror is the mountain Faith removes;
That mountain barrier between man and peace.
'Tis Faith disarms destruction; and absolves
From ev'ry clam'rous charge, the guiltless tomb.
YOUNG, *Night IV.*

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A

FUNERAL SERMON, &c.

1 COR. XV. 55—57.

O Death where is thy sting? O Grave where is thy victory? The sting of Death is Sin, and the strength of Sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE cause of Satan is always supported by misrepresentation. From the first falsehood uttered in the garden of Eden,* to the last he may have injected into our minds, it has been his invariable practice to deck sin in false colours, and to place religion in an unfavourable aspect.

Notwithstanding these devices, the cause of Christ and his people will eventually prevail: truth, ever consistent, *shines more and more unto the perfect day*,† supported by testimonies, and evidenced by effects, which its adversaries

* Gen. iii. 4, 5.

† Prov. iv. 18.

can neither gainsay nor resist. For though we may be described as melancholy persons, confined by rigid rules, and serving a hard master, the better judgment of the carnal world will at times acknowledge, that Wisdom's *ways are ways of pleasantness*;* and though they *live* with Balak, they would *die* with Israel.

This latter consideration, frequently makes even the *stout-hearted* tremble. Depart they must. The *sentence of death*, none can evade; the uplifted dart, none can elude. However their principles may pretend to support in health, at the last hour they fail. Infidelity can neither speak a word to comfort, nor move a hand to help: if it has not stupified every sense, all is doubt, anxiety, terror, and dismay; *without* is darkness, and *within* is despair.†

Far different is the departure of the righteous. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*‡ He who guided through life, consoles and animates in their last conflict: nay, he at times causes their settled *peace* to swell into holy joy; they not only *see*,

* Prov. iii. 17.

† See a recent and *neighbouring* instance, recorded in a masterly tract by the Rev. Mr. Cooke, of Maidenhead, entitled, "*Reason paying Homage to Revelation, or the Confession of a Deist at the Gates of Death.*" Printed by Burnham, Maidenhead, and Matthews, London. Price 1s.

‡ Psalm xxxvii. 87.

but they also *sing* the *salvation of their God*; they go hence, not merely as acquitted *captives*, but as triumphant *conquerors*: *the Lord their God is with them, and the shout of a King is amongst them.* *

In this triumphant frame of mind the late Mr. *Wotton* ended his pilgrimage. He began here, and in a *strange land* that song, which now with unabating ardour, he chaunts before the throne: he may literally be said to have died *with the praises of God on his lips*; for when his tongue was cleaving to the roof of his mouth, he sang part of the 103d psalm. The *bruised reed* is now exchanged for a *golden harp*; and he has laid aside the *helmet* for a blood bought *crown*.

Who is there in this numerous congregation, but is ready to exclaim, *let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?*† But in order to this, we must live the life—we must fight under the same banner, and expire in the same cause. Let us then examine the principles by which believers are actuated, and which alone can authorise our adopting the language of the text;—*O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?*

On the present solemnity, far from attempting an elaborate discussion of the passage before us, I shall endeavour, under divine assistance, to sim-

* Numb. xxiii. 21.

† Numb. xxiii. 10.

plify as much as possible, and comprehend some important particulars, under two leading and prominent ideas of the same character.—*e. g.* We have

I. Death *devouring*.

II. Death *destroyed*.

As we proceed, some circumstances may be adduced respecting the deceased, in order to exemplify our remarks, and to improve the occasion of our meeting together. *God be merciful unto us and bless us!* May he give the hearing ear, the understanding mind, and the tender heart!

I. Death *devouring*—death in arms—death formidable. Under this division of our subject, we are led to notice the *enemy*—his *weapon*—and his *power*: the enemy, is *death*; his *weapon*, is the *sting of sin*; and his power, is the *strength of the law*.

1. The *enemy*. So he is termed in the word of God, *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death*.

Death, simply considered, is no more than a privative idea, signifying a cessation of life; or, that what was once living, lives no more. But it has been the general, perhaps the universal, custom of mankind, to personify it. Imagination gives death a formidable appearance; arms it with a dart, a sting, or a scythe; and represents

sents it as an active, inexorable, and invincible reality.* Thus the sacred scripture, accomodating itself to the language and apprehension of mortals, speaks here of death under the idea of a person.

“ *Death reigns,*” says the oracle of heaven. “ He reigns as a king. He enslaves as a tyrant. His empire is ancient, and his dominions are large : so *ancient* his empire, as to be almost coeval with human existence ; so *large* his dominions, as to extend to all the posterity of *Adam*, two individuals excepted.† All the past generations of men have bowed to his scepter, and all that now survive must soon feel the force of his hand. For *it is appointed unto men once to die.*‡ *Death has passed upon all, for that all have sinned.*§ *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death ?*||

This enemy has

An *auxiliary*, the *grave*.—“ The grave is one of these things that are never satisfied. Her language is that of the *horseleech's daughters*, *give, give*. She devours thousands at a meal, but never says, “ it is enough,” Death, with his

* Man makes a death which nature never made.

And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.

YOUNG, *Night IV.*

† Enoch and Elijah.

‡ Heb. ix. 27.

§ Rom. v. 12.

|| Psalm lxxxix. 48.

javelin in his hand, stalks along our streets; or knocks with as little ceremony at the mansion of the great, as at the cottage of the poor;* commissioned from above, he levels the mortal blow, and the destined victim falls a prey to the vilest insects. Or,† more agreeably to the apostle's metaphor, *Death*, like the insidious viper, fastens his envenomed tooth in our vitals; like the malignant scorpion, penetrates the heart with his impoisoned sting, and we sicken, fade, and die." The *grave* receives us into her close confinement, and pours upon us the utmost contempt, while she sits victorious on her mouldy throne; and the very worm we tread upon, triumphs over the proud lord of the creation.

"How great is thy authority, O grave! And to what sordid humiliating purposes dost thou improve it! Millions of our race hast thou taken captive, whose bodies are yet detained in thy gloomy mansions; and millions more, must shortly people thy dominions, and extend thy conquests. But though thy victories are multiplied, they shall not be perpetual; though thy power is great, it shall come to an end.†"

Such is the *enemy*—the great destroyer—the *king of terrors*: see the figure *mounted on his*

* Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum Tabernas
Regumque Turres.——HOR.

† Rev. Ab. Booth on the Text. London, 1772.

pale horse; and observe, "the foe is *in arms*." And what are they? What are his weapons?

In a sense, death has many weapons. There are weapons to destroy the body. As already intimated, *he goes about seeking*, not only *whom*, but also *how he may devour*. Sickness in various forms—accidents, so called, strike the blow; the arrow is discharged, but the "insatiate archer" is unseen. The very food we eat but augments the principles of corruption, and hurries us onward to the tomb.—But he has a weapon also for the *soul*. This is what we particularly are to notice.

2. His *weapon*. This is the *sling of sin*: emphatically, the *destroying weapon in his hand*;^{*} and with which he strikes a wound, which the spirit of a man cannot sustain. He has *one* sling, and that one is *sufficient*. If *one* sin be unpardoned when your eyes close in death, they will awake in those torments that will forbid their closing any more for ever.

This, my brethren, is not a point of speculation, but it is a personal, a home concern to us all. We must every one feel the *stroke* of death; but, should any here present feel also the *sling*—the formidable, incurable *sling of sin*; good for *such a one* would it be, that he had never been born!

* Ezek. ix. 1.

A wise God, has implanted in the human mind a love to the body to which it is united; inasmuch that it is said generally, that *no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.** A separation of the soul and body is painful to the reflection; yet there have been some, who stupified with guilt, or given over to *believe their own lie,†* have rushed forward to the bar of God in the very act of disobedience, and reeking in their own blood. *Such* perceive not the sting, until it be felt; and the barbed dart is sheathed, never more to be extracted.

But the bulk of mankind, however they may dissemble their fears, drown them by the noise of company, or stifle them in the entertainments of sense, have some apprehension of this weapon. "Death can sting at a distance." The thought of their approaching doom *troubles them, their joints are loosed, and their knees smite together, at the sight of the hand-writing that seals their approaching doom.* "In this state sinners have cried out—they have roared like *a wild bull in the net.* It is upon record, of one who vainly offered a thousand pounds to his physicians, to prolong his life but a single day. The relation is in print of another, who, pointing to the fire in his chamber, said, if he were to be only twenty thousand years in such a fire, he should esteem it

* Eph. v. 29.

† 2 Thess. ii. 12.

a mercy,

a mercy, compared with what he felt, and with what he saw awaiting him."* Such instances of the sting of death, are, I apprehend, much more frequent than is generally imagined. They are as much as possible suppressed; if they transpire, the world attribute it to the height of their disorder, and hasten to consign the whole to oblivion. But, *be not deceived*. Death has a *sting*; and if it be not plucked out, it must take effect. *The wages of sin is death.*

This sting was taken away, in the case of the deceased. On enquiry as to his fear of death, he expressed no dread. From the commencement of his illness, he had *good hope through grace*; and had received it as *worthy of his own acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*. This work was not left to a dying bed, but in health he had obtained an interest in him, whom in sickness he found both his physician and his friend.

But whence doth death derive this power? A dart lies harmless on the ground, until some hand takes it up and directs its course. What is it that nerves the arm of Death, and gives his arrow force? It is "*the law*." This is,

* See Rev. Mr. *Newton* on the Text. *Messiah*, vol. II, Ser. 44. See also an affecting account of the death of a young nobleman, in *Young's Centaur* not fabulous.

3. His *power*.—"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

What is this law? When God made man he gave him a law or commandment. *The Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.** This law, our first parents violated; they were dead in point of law, and became every moment liable to the punishment: as it is written, *by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned.†* The law is God's revealed will.

The whole moral law of God, as written in the Bible, was originally engraven on man's heart. It was not only the duty, but it was also the inclination of *Adam to love the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength.‡* Had man continued in innocence, there had been no need of the delivery of the ten commandments, nor of any of the precepts in the word of God. They only became necessary in consequence of the fall; to convince of sin and to restrain from evil. It is the most fatal delusion, to suppose that the law was given to bring us to heaven, by any obedience unto it.

* Gen. ii. 16, 17.

† Rom. v. 12.

‡ Matt. xii. 30.

The leading intention—the great use of the law, is, as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ,* who is the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth.† Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.‡ And again, that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident; for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them—wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.§

This law gives strength to sin, and sharpens the sting of death, by authorizing the punishment inflicted on transgressors. The law of God binds over the transgressor to a future judgment, just as the laws of England bind over a thief, a traitor, a murderer, to execution. Does a bye-stander ask, “Why is the man brought to an ignominious end?” the answer is, the strength of his sin—that which makes it sin in this country, is the law of the land. Does a blind Pharisee enquire why,|| notwithstanding his fasting twice a week, and giv-

* Gal. ii. 16, 17.

† Rom. x. 4.

‡ Rom. iii. 19, 20.

§ Gal. iii. 11, 19.

|| Matt. xxiii 33. xxi. 31, 32.

*ing tythes of all he possesses,** we venture to pronounce, that if he dies in his present state he must be cast into hell? The reply must be, that he is already a criminal convicted by the righteous law of God: that, doing a present duty will not cancel a past crime; that all have violated the commands of heaven; and therefore all, without exception, come under the curse, which enters the moment that sin enters; which writes out the *accusation against us*, which, if it be not *nailed to the cross*,† will be produced in open court at the last tribunal, to give sanction to our punishment, and strength to our pain.

This power, like the sting of death, some never feel, until it is too late. Instead of finding its strong bands shutting them up, and binding them fast, they vainly imagine they can *bind the law to them*; and with their *new ropes* can confine this *Samson*. But when God by his Spirit convinces us of the nature and extent of his law, that it requires an obedience, spiritual, universal, and continual; that a commandment may be broken by the eye, and violated in the heart;‡ and that *he that transgresses in one point is guilty of all*; then, we find the *strength of sin in the law*.§ Then we see how *exceeding broad and comprehensive the commandment* is; and then our deaf

* Luke xviii.

† Col. ii. 14.

‡ Matt. vi. 21, 22, 27, 28.

§ James ii. 10.

ears become unstopped to hear the thundering curse from Mount Sinai, denouncing *the wrath of God against all unrighteousness*.^{*} Then we find, that in point of *justification* before God, all stand upon the same inglorious level, and that *John*, who lay in the bosom of his Lord, equally needs the atonement of Jesus with *Manasséh*, who filled the streets of Jerusalem with blood.[†] For there is no difference, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.[‡] All are debtors, and have nothing to pay; all are criminals, and have nothing to plead; all must therefore come like the servants of Benhadad, with ropes about their necks, pleading the rich mercy of the King of Israel.[§]

Paul of Tarsus felt this. He once could see no strength in the law, touching its righteousness he thought he had nothing to fear. *I was alive without the law, once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*|| Every Christian, more or less, experiences this. Something of the old leaven of self-righteousness cleaves to us all; but the more we see of Jesus, the less we shall boast of self. The sun will extinguish the taper, and we shall henceforth come only to the brightness of its light, and the glory of its rising.¶

Though the deceased does not appear to have

* Psalm cxix. 96.

§ Rom. i. 18.

† Rom. iii. 22. 2.

|| 1 Kings, xx. 31.

‡ Rom. vii. 9, 11.

¶ Isa. lx. 3.

been a self-justifier, he was not entirely divorced from some prejudices on this ground, until he heard the gospel. *The foolishness of our preaching made him wise unto salvation.** He could say, "vile and full of sin I am," and often with pleasure has he repeated in my hearing, "*None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good.*"

But it is time to proceed to another view of the same object, and "to behold death softened into a privilege, by Him who has brought *life and immortality to light.*"

II. *Death disarmed and destroyed.*—"Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In these words, we have a *blessing conferred, victory. The author of it, God—the obtainer of it, our Lord Jesus Christ—the persons for whom it is wrought, us—and the duty of all such, thanks.* But as our time will not permit an enlargement, let us condense these particulars (if I may use the term) into the following proposition, viz.—*Believers obtain a victory through Jesus Christ their Lord.*

The term *victory*, implies a previous conflict: A war in which every soul is engaged. On earth, if nations contend together, there are exceptions. Old age may excuse; a place of dignity, or a sacred office will exempt. A difference is also

* Cor. i. 2.

made between male and female : * Sometimes, money will exonerate ; at others, a substitute can serve ; but such evasions do not here avail. *There is no discharge in this war ; we must conquer, or die.*

The feat of this war, is more immediately, the breast of man, where every district is in subjection to *the prince of the power of the air.**—the *strong man armed*, who would *keep his goods in peace*. He lives, walks, rules, triumphs over every unrenewed soul.* And, (O the infatuation of men !) though he plants a dagger at their breast, and marks them for destruction, they fight his battles and support his cause ; they trample on the law of God, in order to obey the law of hell ; they *rush on the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler*, and attempt to strike Him *with the fist of sin*.

But there are those, who have left the traitor's cause, and come forth from the rebel camp, returning to their allegiance, and the Captain of their salvation.† “ These have to war *a good warfare*. And though weak in themselves, and their enemies mighty, they may do that, which in other soldiers would be presumption ; and has often been the cause of defeat : they may triumph, while in the heat of battle ; and assure themselves of victory, before the conflict is

† Eccl. viii. 8.

† Heb. ii, 19.

actually decided. For the Lord, their great commander, fights for them, goes before them, and treads their enemies under his feet."* *The battle is not theirs, but the Lord's.* He is their *strength, and their shield*; in this war his honor is concerned, and his faithfulness is pledged that *no weapon formed against† them shall prosper*; but, that they shall follow him from conflict to conquest, and from conquest to glory.

This victory is fourfold.

1. It is a victory over *sin*.—It is the happiness of all who are interested in the gospel covenant, that they are delivered out of the accursed state of those who *continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*;‡ this has been called the very *point* of the sting of death. Believers have victory over the *guilt*—the *power*—and the *punishment* of *sin*.—They not only triumph over *sin*, but they have, secondly, victory over

Satan.—It was promised in the beginning, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*.§ The blessed consequence of this victory is, that they who believe and receive the gospel, are recovered out of his hellish snares; they are no longer *led captive by him at his will*,||

* 2 Chron. xx. 15.

† Isa. liv. 17.

‡ Gal. iii. 10.

§ Gen. iii. 15.

|| 2 Tim. ii. 26.

but are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of *satan* unto *God**. His fiery darts are hurled with a force that could “wield these elements;” yet shall they be like that which poor old *Priam*’s unstrung arm threw at the murdering *Pyrrhus*—they faintly ring against our *shield of faith*, but will fall harmless to the ground.—They have victory, thirdly, over

Death.—Christ hath *abolished death*, i. e. he has abolished its tyranny, and enervated its strength. *Natural* fears, may more or less remain; but all slavish apprehensions are removed†. This is a conquest, of which thousands have no idea; for they have but *one* idea of death. They have a natural dread of dissolution, but know very little of the *cause* of their terror: others, are said to “go off as lambs,” who are now *roaring like lions*. Nothing but a conviction of sin, can give a true dread of death. Then, it is not so much the sight of the *pale horse*, but the *hell that follows after*. This it is, that extorts the bitter cry to the impenetrable rocks, and the immoveable mountains;—this gives the bitter foretaste of the *worm that never dies*; and impresses the dreadful sensation, of a *fire that never can be quenched*‡!

But death to a believer, has, in effect, changed its nature. He can only hurt the body, he can-

* Acts xxvi. 18.

† Heb. ii. 14. 15.

‡ Isa. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 44. 48.

not touch the soul. "He only puts a period to those pursuits, employments, and engagements, which are suited to the body, but not to those about which holy souls are occupied; and with which they are delighted and improved. Hence, believers do not properly *die*, but they *fall asleep in Jesus*. Jesus *died*. Death when it stung him, *stung itself* to death. Like the enraged bee, he lost his sting; and all the harm he can do to God's Saints, is, to put it absolutely out of his own power ever to hurt them more.

This was Mr. Wotton's experience. The day of his departure, he was perfectly resigned; but when the hour arrived, he could not only submit to the stroke, but he could even welcome the messenger. "*If this be dying,*" said he, "*I would not but die for ten thousand worlds!*" And then, (as already intimated) though in the last conflict, he not only selected, but with his tongue, faltering in death, himself set the tune to the 103d Psalm,* amidst his weeping friends, whom he found unable from grief to lead the melody. Here is victory at the last hour; here is light in the dark valley! Blessed be God, that this song *can* be sung before we depart. *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* Which leads me to add, that there is a further victory over

* Dr. Watts's version. "My soul repeat his praise, &c.

4thly. *The Grave.* Christ is our divine *head*. And so near is our relation to him, that we are said to be *members of his body*; when, therefore, our divine head rejoiced and triumphed; all the members rejoiced with him. By dying, he paid down the price of our redemption; and by his resurrection, he shewed that infinite price was accepted; we are entirely *his*; not only our immortal souls that *return to God who gave them*; but also our *vile bodies that fall to the ground*. No violence can withhold them from him; whenever he claims his right, death must restore them. While, therefore, the bodies of his faithful followers continue in the grave, though *they are gathered together in the pit*, and are shut up in the *prison house*, yet at his appointed time he will *visit them*. Their enemies may insult over them, saying, "*they are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise.*" But notwithstanding this vain presumption, thus saith the Lord, "*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*"*

Such, in brief, is the *victory* asserted in the text. Blessed be God there is a deliverance to be *expected* by the miserable sinner; and to be *enjoyed* by the real saint.

* *Isaiah* xxvi. 19.

In every particular you have heard, our dear departed brother in Christ would, I am sure, were he permitted to leave the heavenly seat, *confirm* all that has been said. Methinks he would say—" Though you cannot express *things unutterable*, nor explain the support I had, yet speak plainly to the people; assure them all you can, and you cannot say too much of the adorable Jesus, that can and does help in a dying hour.— Warn the young, that they *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*;* intreat the aged, to behold their lengthened shadow, to prize their setting sun, and instead of killing *time*, to endeavour to *redeem it*. Comfort my family, by the assurance, that if they *follow on to know the Lord* and keep close to him, they shall come here also. Inform my neighbours and acquaintance, that religion is no jesting matter, that though "men live fools," death will cure them of their folly. Tell them that death has a sting, and the grave a final victory over thousands; but it is here known no more. *The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne feeds us, he leads us to living fountains of waters, and God himself wipes away all tears from our eyes for ever.*§

My brethen, can any system short of the gospel of Jesus, afford such consolation? Can proud

* Eccles. xii. 1.

† Eph. v. 16.

‡ Hos. vi. 3.

§ Rev. vii, 17.

philosophy speak thus? It may awe us to silence, but cannot footh us to repose; it cannot abate the sense of our calamity, though it may make us ashamed to complain. Can the deluded *Deist* offer us any thing in exchange for our hope? when he pulls down the main column in the fabric of human felicity, what other support does he bring? We have already *all* that he can give; but we have, *super-added*, that comfort to which he must be a perfect stranger—"a sure and certain hope" beyond the grave; a hope that rejoiceth the heart; that calms the breast of care, and gladdens the brow of sorrow; that smoothes the road of life, and gilds the vale of death.—*Hold fast then, that thou hast, let no man take thy crown.**

IMPROVEMENT.

Infer. 1. *The obligation we are under to return thanks to God for this victory.*—This is plainly asserted in the text. "Thanks be to God." This deliverance was planned in the divine mind, and is the produce of the divine mercy. Infinite wisdom concerted the scheme, and boundless goodness provided the means. Our destruction is of ourselves, but *our help is in the Lord alone.†* Ever remember, in this fight, believers gain it not by *their own sword, neither is it their own bow*

* Rev. iii. 11.

† Hos. xiii. 9.

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philosophy speak thus? It may awe us to silence, but cannot sooth us to repose; it cannot abate the sense of our calamity, though it may make us ashamed to complain. Can the deluded *Deist* offer us any thing in exchange for our hope? when he pulls down the main column in the fabric of human felicity, what other support does he bring? We have already *all* that he can give; but we have, *super-added*, that comfort to which he must be a perfect stranger—"a sure and certain hope" beyond the grave; a hope that rejoiceth the heart; that calms the breast of care, and gladdens the brow of sorrow; that smoothes the road of life, and gilds the vale of death.—*Hold fast then, that thou hast, let no man take thy crown.**

IMPROVEMENT.

Infer. 1. *The obligation we are under to return thanks to God for this victory.*—This is plainly asserted in the text. "Thanks be to God." This deliverance was planned in the divine mind, and is the produce of the divine mercy. Infinite wisdom concerted the scheme, and boundless goodness provided the means. Our destruction is of ourselves, but *our help is in the Lord alone.†* Ever remember, in this fight, believers gain it not by *their own sword, neither is it their own bow*

* Rev. iii. 11.

† Hos. xiii. 9.

*that helps them.** We are entirely indebted to the divine compassion and goodness. Man could not have saved himself, nor had he any desire of so doing. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us!†* The father *saves not his own Son, but freely gives him up for us all.‡* The Son freely consents and comes a willing victim; he takes our sins, and carries our sorrows. He dies, that we may live; he endures the cross, that we may enjoy the crown.

This blessedness is all *His* work. The means are of the gracious appointment of Jehovah. In the eternal counsel of peace it was determined, and each of the three persons in the ever blessed and glorious Trinity had their respective parts to fulfil. The sovereignty and acceptance is sustained by the *Father*—the work of redemption is effected by the *Son*, both united in one Jehovah; and being applied by the *Spirit*—*Christ of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.§* This then is our meet, right, and bounden duty, to give continual thanks. God be praised for these proofs of the power of the gospel in this place. And may there not only be a shaking of *the dry bones* here, but in every other place of worship where the

* Psalm xliv. 3. † 1 John, iv. 10, 19. ‡ Rom. viii. 32.

§ 1 Cor. i. 30.

genuine gospel is preached, until *the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas!**

2. *What a blessed thing it is, to share in this triumph!*—We have considered death in arms, and death despoiled; death an enemy, and death a friend. Now can *you* bear a part in these victories? Has the law *convinced you of SIN*†—has Christ delivered you from *the strength of the LAW*? Then, even now, you are *more than conquerors*. O how happy should you be! How chearful and resigned to the Almighty's will; how devoted to the Redeemer's service; how zealous in his righteous cause! What, though you have troubles and trials, they will soon be over; though like the deceased, you may have a sickly body, and many things to distress your mind, remember in the world to come, the *inhabitants shall no more say I am sick*;‡ All tears shall be wiped from their eyes, and all sorrow removed from their hearts.

3. *How unhappy is the state of those, who have no interest in these blessings!*—What miserable slaves are such even *here*; but what will they be hereafter? May I not fear lest I should be speaking to some, who so far from having reason to thank God for this victory, are fast bound in the chain

* Isa. xi. 9. † John xvi. 8.

‡ Isa. xxxiii. 24.

of their sins, and who still draw in the yoke of inordinate desire !—Time is shortly ending, and then all your sports will be over*. *Die* you must ; *rise* from the dead you will ; not to everlasting life, but to *everlasting shame and contempt*. All, all shall *come forth from their graves* ; but mark the awful distinction—they that have *done good*, they who have this right of evidence † *unto the resurrection of life* ; but they who have *done evil*, *unto the resurrection of damnation* ‡. O, with what horror and surprize will such hear the sound of the Archangel's trumpet, summoning them to the awful bar ! How will you wish for the mountains to fall upon you, and the hills to cover you ? But, “ every island, sea and mountain, heaven and earth, shall flee away.” O ye sons and daughters of dissipation, Why waste those hours in folly and sin which will haunt you in sickness, and dispirit you in death ! Why say peace, peace, when *God says there is no peace to the wicked* ? § Why say, that an amended life, and a future moral conduct, will bring you to heaven, when he who has the keys of the kingdom declares, *Except a man be born again he cannot see it.* || Why deceive yourselves on these points ? What think ye of *everlasting chains* of

* *Nunquam joca dabis.* † Rev. xxii. 14. ‡ John v. 28, 29.
§ Isa. xlviii. 22. || John iii. 1, &c.

darkness for ever? What think ye of being shut up in the doleful prison of hell, with murderers of soul and body? *O that you were wise, that you would consider your latter end!** Let not the text read from the pulpit be no more thought of, until it be read over your lifeless corpse. Now the Lord waits to be gracious. I have to proclaim *liberty for the captive, and the opening of the prison door to them that are bound*†. Though your *sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though red like crimson they shall be as wool*‡. Who is there amongst you that hears and obeys the invitation to the Lord Jesus Christ? For whom shall there be melody *in the presence of the Angels of God*?§

4. *The little cause the weakest believer has to fear?*—Some may be saying, “I remember the time when I had no dread of death, and thought myself sure of victory; but my evidences are dark, and *fearfulness and trembling have taken hold of me.*” Let it be enquired whether you have suffered *sin* to triumph? If this *accursed thing be in the camp*, no wonder if you are troubled: or, perhaps, you are endeavouring to triumph in your own strength, and then, marvel not if you are left to feel your weakness. But if neither of these be the case, *fear not O ye of little*

* Deut. xxxii. 29. † Luke iv. 18.

‡ Isa. i. 18. § Luke xv. 10.

*faith, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**, and he will give it at his own time, and in his own way. Many a feeble soul has entered the dark valley, crying, *Lord help me*, who has afterwards shouted *victory through the blood of the Lamb!* We are not esteemed on account of any thing done *by* us, or wrought *in* us, but for the work done *for* us, when the Lord Jesus Christ bowed his head on the tree, and *finished* the salvation of his people.

One morning Mr. Wotton appeared much dejected; I found it arose from the well-meant, but mistaken zeal of some one who had been turning his eye from the cross, to look for a fancied meetness, holiness, and assurance in *himself*. Thank God, he was soon delivered from this delusion, and henceforth enabled to look only for justification to the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of his incarnate God and Saviour.

My dear hearers, ever thing else will fail you. *Looking unto Jesus†* does every thing; looking from him, nothing. This alone will make us mourn on account of sin, and abound in all good works. Thus looking, if we have the full assurance of faith, let us be thankful; if not, let us be content.

Infer. 5. The consideration of the text and such like precious promises, together with such

* Luke xii. 32.

† Heb. xii. 1.

triumphant

triumphant departures, afford comfort to those who are deprived of their friends.—*Sorrow* we may, for even *Jesus wept* * over the grave of another, though he did not in the prospect of his own; but *let us not sorrow as men who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will he bring with him.....Wherefore comfort one another with these words* † True, it is difficult to part with those with whom we have been long united; with whom we have taken sweet counsel; and who have been partakers of our joys, and partners in our sorrows: but while we are grieving for our loss, let us not forget that it is their eternal gain; they have outrid the storm, and are entered into the blissful haven of repose, *where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.* ‡

Infer. 6. The necessity of following those, who thus, *through faith and patience inherit the promises.* §—To die the death, it has been said, we must live the life of the righteous. And what is that? It is *the life of faith upon the Son of God*; || receiving ever out of his fulness, even *grace upon grace*, ¶ *grace to-day, grace to-morrow, grace every day, until grace ends in glory.* This was Mr. Wotton's plan. He desired to

* John xi. 35. † 1 Theff. iv. 13, 14, 18.

‡ Job iii. 17. § Heb. vi. 12. || Gal. ii. 20.

¶ *Καὲν αὐτὸς χάρις.* John i. 16.

work *from* life, though he could not work *for* life. As a *man* his character was well known, and equally respected; as a *tradesman*, he was a pattern of fair dealing, and his conscience was remarkably tender;—but this is not all, he was a *man of God*. Athirst for God, even for the living God, the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelt, were his longing and abode. The inclemency of the sky never restrained his footsteps; and from the bed of languishing he has often arisen, and returned to lie down refreshed.

In his family, his face like Moses shone, whilst he led their devotions, and offered up the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise. Alone, praying without ceasing, he held fast by the Angel and would not let him go until he blessed him. His requests were heard and answered. He expired with this sentence from his lips—"I love thee O Lord my God!"

Thus lived respected, and died triumphant, this man of God, and who, *though dead yet speaketh**. We call upon you to follow him so far as he followed Christ. We exhort you, by every motive that can influence, to press forward to the mark of the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus. The same crown of glory is held out for the meanest; the same victory is pro-

* Heb. xi. 4.

mised to the weakest saint, See, see what *Jesus*
 can do for us in a dying hour ; he saves us from
 the fear of death, and delivers from the power of
 hell. When all the friends and interests, all
 the riches and honour under heaven, can neither
 speak a word to comfort, nor move a hand to
 help, then shall the comforts of heaven descend
 like a refreshing dew or shower upon the parched
 ground. Heart and flesh may fail, but God will
 be the strength of our heart and our portion for
 ever. Thanks be to God for *these* promises.
Thanks be to God who giveth us this victory.
Blessed be God for Jesus Christ !

FINIS.

ZAP 66

PUBLISHED BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

1. *God manifest in the Flesh.* A Sermon, preached on Christmas Day, 1791.
2. *The Prodigal Son.* A Sermon on New-Year's Day, 1792.
3. *The good Samaritan.* A Charity Sermon, preached June 1793.
4. *Mary Magdalen.* A Sermon, preached at the Magdalen Hospital, 1794.
5. *Self-righteousness renounced.* A Funeral Sermon, preached at Wycombe, April 1798.
6. *The Alarm of Fire improved.* A Sermon, preached September 1799.
7. *Reply to Slavery no Oppression.* London, 1788.
8. *A Check to the delusive and dangerous Opinions of Baron Swedenborg,* 1797.